

## 12.18.2007 - House Passes 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Bill - Huntington

The U.S. House of Representatives Monday approved a comprehensive 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which includes millions requested by Representative Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) for projects in and around the Huntington area, including Route 10, St. Mary's Medical Center, Marshall University, Huntington Jr. College, flood and water control projects, and the Connected Technologies Corridor (CTC) Program.

At Rahall's request, the Omnibus Bill includes \$980,000 specifically for widening and improving safety along Route 10 between US-119 and I-64 in Lincoln, Logan, and Wyoming Counties, continuing Rahall's long-running efforts to improve what is widely recognized as one of the nation's most dangerous roads.

"For too long, we have traveled on the dangerous, deteriorating Route 10," said Rahall. "This funding will help bring an added measure of safety to the many West Virginians who use the road each day."

Rahall also secured \$984,400 for the City of Milton for waterline extensions to provide service to the east Milton area, a new water storage tank, improvements to the water treatment plant, and waterline replacement in the downtown Milton area. The project will serve approximately 81 new customers in the area of Kilgore Creek and Little Creek.

In addition, the bill contains \$468,384 for the Southern West Virginia Environmental Infrastructure Project, requested by Rahall, to continue implementation of water, flood control, and environmental infrastructure projects.

"Our nation's water infrastructure is often overlooked, but in southern West Virginia, we do not have that luxury," Rahall said. "I will continue to do all I can to secure the needed investments so that our water is safe and clean, and our communities are protected from flooding."

The bill also included \$1,034,604 for Huntington Jr. College's captioning program, \$430,348 for St. Mary's Medical Center's Center for Education, and \$245,000 for the Advanced Engineering and Applied Technology Complex at Marshall University.

"St. Mary's Medical Center, Marshall University, and Huntington Jr. College offer some of the finest educational opportunities in West Virginia," Rahall said. "This funding will allow West Virginia students to take advantage of these programs and train for high-paying, high-tech jobs, without having to leave our state."

The St. Mary's funding will go toward the relocation and expansion of the hospital's Center for Education, which includes the St. Mary's Schools of Nursing, Radiography, and Respiratory Care. To date, Rahall has secured more than \$1 million in federal funding for the Center for Education, which will allow for a 20 percent increase in enrollment.

As part of Marshall's College of Information Technology and Engineering (CITE), the Advanced Engineering and Applied Technology Complex will use the new funding secured by Rahall to house the principal science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, providing education and training facilities for over 5,000 students.

Congressman Rahall also secured \$150,000 for the Connected Technologies Corridor Program, a regional, economic development entity, which aims to improve the technology infrastructure and entrepreneurial development in southern West Virginia. The CTC program encompasses projects for which Rahall has helped steer \$9 million in federal dollars in the past, including the Interstate 64 Technology Corridor, the Interstate 77 Technology Corridor, and technology centers and business parks in Lewisburg, Hinton, Montgomery, Huntington and Beckley, as well as Concord University.

"This funding is essential to the development of programs that will bring the latest technological opportunities to businesses in our area and will help keep all of southern West Virginia on a level playing field in a sector that is becoming increasingly more competitive and constantly changing," Rahall said.

The Omnibus Bill also included \$1.081 million from the COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Interoperability Program for Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technology for law enforcement agencies in Cabell and Wayne Counties.

"The very qualities that make southern West Virginia great -- its rugged topography and rural nature -- often make it difficult for law enforcement officers to effectively and efficiently perform their duties," said Rahall. "I am thrilled to have gained approval for funding to bring better technologies to our courageous officers so that they can keep our state safe."

"True credit belongs to Senator Byrd," said Rahall. "Without his strong and vigorous leadership at the helm of the Senate Appropriations Committee, we would not have been able to achieve these levels of funding for our domestic needs. I am grateful for his commitment to bringing valuable federal investments to southern West Virginia, and look forward to continuing to work with him to address the issues important to our communities."

Several other southern West Virginia initiatives supported by Rahall received funding under the bill, including:

- \$32,185,656 for Ohio River Locks and Dams
- \$1,033,200 for the Lower Mud River
- \$905,280 for the Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam
- \$196,800 for the Island Creek Basin
- \$147,600 for the Upper Guyandotte River Basin

The Omnibus Bill combines the 11 remaining Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations bills into one bill. The legislation will provide appropriations for projects across the country and fund all federal government agencies. The Fiscal Year 2008 Defense Appropriations Bill was passed earlier this year.